1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

CHAPTER X

SHAMANISTIC AND MEDICINAL PRACTICES

Introduction

756 [171] The shamanistic and medicinal practices of the Winnebago differ in no respect from those found all over the woodland area and there is consequently no need for discussing them at length. The stories told about *Midjistego* and old Lincoln are the famous tricks and sleight-of-hand performances known all over America. There does not seem to be as much said about the conjuring lodge as is the case among the Ojibwa. This apparently is identical with the Winnebago *waruka'na*, "exerting one's powers." The lack of specific information relating to this subject obtained by the author may, however, be due to accident.

278 754 [187] The Winnebago make a fourfold classification of their medicines: Those that affect a person by direct administration; those that affect him by their odor, like love and racing medicines; those that affect him at a distance; and those that are shot at an individual. Most of the medicines are obtained by fasting, although they can also be bought. The most important of these medicines are those called the stench-earth medicine (see p. 259) and the black-earth medicine.

[182] Medicine may be used in a number of ways, but principally as offerings or as means of killing animals or men. It is often chewed.

[189] In order to make arrows or guns unerring, medicine is frequently rubbed upon them.

754 Sympathetic magic is of course well known. The procedure is the common one. A picture of the man to be harmed is drawn on the ground and shot at, stabbed, etc. The man is then certain to die a short time after, in the same manner as the figure has been mutilated.

There are two general magical ceremonies. *Waruka'na*, to know something by exerting one's powers; *wunaⁿtcire*, to hypnotize in the distance. (For description of latter, see p. 111.)

787 *Example of waruka'na.* J.'s older brother and a friend had failed to return home and so J.'s grandfather went to a man called C. English and, offering him some tobacco, asked him to find out something about his son i. e., to exert his powers. English did so and told the old man that they were camping and making sugar and that if

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

825
756 on the earth, have medicines that you are to use on earth. Whatever you say on earth it will be so. You have been blessed with all the things that are on and under the earth."

All the fowls and insects of the air, all the beings that have wings, blessed him and gave him medicines, which he was to mix with other medicines. He was told to make use of all the insects of the earth and air, some of which we never see. All those who live on earth, all the fishes in the water, and all the different kinds of water-spirits blessed him with medicines. He was blessed with, and told to use as medicines, all those plants that live in the water. He was blessed with the leech, one of the animals that lives in the water, and he was to use it in medicine mixing. They say that it is good to mix the leech with other medicines to relieve pain. He was blessed with all the trees, that we see to-day, which he was to use as medicines. Their bark, leaves, and roots are considered very good for such purposes. He was blessed also with all the small undergrowth, whose leaves, bark, inner bark, blossoms, and roots he was to use for medicine. He was blessed with all the weeds, and he was to use their heads and leaves for medicine, but their roots were to be used for other purposes.

Thus all the different kinds of plants that grow on this earth blessed him. The earth also blessed him and said to him, "Grandson, as the other spirits are blessing you, I, also, will bless you. Earthmaker has placed me here, and I therefore bless you with all plants that grow upon me, and all the trees and woods and animals that exist on this earth, and lastly, with life and myself (i. e., earth). You may use me, and especially the blue clay that you derive from me, for medicines. Should you use as medicine all these things with which I have blessed you, especially if you use me, as medicine, you will be able to accomplish all that you attempt.

"If a person who is sick offers you tobacco (i. e., asks you to cure him), remember that I also would like to smoke and that it is for that reason that I have blessed you."[1]

[826] Birds, especially eagles, are used in the making of medicines. The entire body of a raven, including the heart and brains, are used, and also the following snakes: The gray snake, the black snake, the blue snake, the yellow snake, the bull snake, and the snake that breaks itself in two. The rattlesnake is used in a mixture given to women when in labor. If a woman hurts herself during pregnancy and kills the child within her womb, she can be made to deliver the embryo if she uses the medicine mentioned above.

[844 278 845]

[776 782]

[1] According to general belief the spirits are supposed to have entered into a sort of "bargain" with the human beings by which they were to bestow their blessings upon them in exchange for tobacco, buckskin, and feathers. Of course, it must be understood that individuals must have the necessary requirements, such as a certain ability in of mind, fasting, etc., before their offering of tobacco has any meaning to the spirits.

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

Toads are used, but only for poison medicines. The quail's heart is used for the same purpose. If a person is killed outright, his heart is used as a medicine, as the human heart is regarded as having great efficacy in such medicines. It is used in war, for compelling people to give you presents, and for courting women. The bear likewise is used for a variety of purposes. Its liver is especially powerful. It is rubbed over the body whenever in pain. It is often used by women who have injured themselves in childbirth, or in the form of tonics, poultices, and emetic; or for toothaches, bathing sore eyes, earaches, headaches; as snuff, as a physic, for burns, strictures, boils, hemorrhages, injections in the rectum, consumption, measles, dysentery, chills, nosebleed, pains in the stomach, and headaches caused by poisoning. 825 756 826 [757]

Sometimes a woman would take a hair of her husband and stick it into some bad medicine. In such a case he would never leave her for he would become very much enamored of her. If ever she went away, he would miss her very much. However, he always had a headache. Finally he would get sick and lose his appetite and then his eyesight. That is why it is forbidden to use this medicine, although some still do it. 832

Many Winnebago are blind, because there is a medicine that causes blindness. If one person offends another who possesses such a medicine, the latter would cause the offender to become blind. 754

The Winnebago have medicines for every purpose; for courting, for becoming rich, for obtaining good looks, etc. Even if a person is very holy, these poisoners can poison him. If a man was a good hunter or if he was wise and good, these bad shamans would poison him. If an individual was a great medicine man and these bad shamans got jealous, they would poison him. Indeed, only if a person was poor and lowly would they like him. Such a man they would never poison for they had no reason for being jealous of him. A bad shaman is always treated with the greatest respect and honor, because he kills many people. [832]

A warrior is also greatly respected and flattered. It is the Indian's greatest desire to become a warrior. All desire that, and they also wish to become great medicine men and bad shamans. 554 156 [756]

This is the way they prepare and use their courting medicines. The courting medicine known to me is a plant of apparently two varieties, one of which has a blue blossom and the other no blossom at all. Otherwise they are alike. The one with the blue blossom is the male and the one without the blossom is the female. When I go out to dig this plant, I do not dig for these two specimens unless I can find them growing together closely. Even then I do not dig any two specimens unless the male is found growing on the east side. For that reason it is very hard to find them. As soon as I find two that 832 278 [824]

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

832 278 fulfill all the conditions I dig them out and mix them together with their own roots. Then I take the blossom of the male and mix it together with the center leaf of the female flower. After that both are ground together thoroughly. Then I go to the woman I wish to court and, at night, when she is asleep, I touch first any part of her body, then a place not far from her heart, and finally the top of her head with this mixture. Finally I make her smell it. I then wake her up and go home. The girl will wonder who had touched her and she will think a good deal about the incident and never forget it. The next time I see her she will like me and she will do whatever I ask of her. The medicine would be working. If I did not see her for a long time, she would get lonesome, and the only thing that would cure her would be to marry me.

There is another medicine which I am now going to describe. When it first sprouts, which is in the spring, it is quite white. This must be taken and dried. Then one must chew it and go near the woman with whom one desires to talk. Approach her on the side from which the wind is blowing so that she can smell the medicine. As soon as she smells it, even although the man chewing it is one whom she has hitherto disliked, she will get to like him. This is the way in which the medicine works.

755 [752] A man who was blessed was told of all these things. He cured all diseases. If a person had been shot and one blessed with the stench-earth medicine was called, he could be cured. In the same manner, if one is stabbed in what would generally be considered a fatal way and if a man blessed with stench-earth was called in time he would save him. The same cure is effected in cases of broken arms and of [752] patients who are on the point of death. It is for this reason that those blessed with the stench-earth medicines are always praised, and that the people say "They surely are in charge of life; for their blessings really come from the spirits, just as they claim."[3]

756 [754] [The "stench-earth" medicine men could undoubtedly cure the sick, but they also used it to poison people. The courting medicine was a poison medicine, and therefore it was not good. Those people cured the body, but they killed the soul. It would have been much better had they saved their souls. They were really working for the devil. It is from him that they got all the bad medicines. Whenever they were offended, they would go and get poisons to kill the 754 774 offender. Thus the devil[4] was really causing them to kill their own souls and the souls of those they poisoned. It is the same with all

[3] The following portion in brackets is the comment of our informant, who is a member of the Peyote cult.

[4] Although he really means the Christian devil many of the traits of the old Winnebago deity Hare-gu'nine, the chief of the bad spirits, are clearly discernible.

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

the other medicines, like the courting medicine, etc. The Indians were destroying their own souls. So Earthmaker decided to give them a new medicine. We have now all broken away from the old things. We have broken away from the devil and are earning our salvation through Earthmaker. For this reason I am thankful both for my sake and that of my people.] 754 774

This is a medicine that is good for consumption, for stomach trouble, for a cold, for a sore throat, and for general illnesses. It consists of the following ingredients: 757 278

1. Waraxa'dax hoske'rera, English unknown.
2. Waraxa'dax ma"nap'a'rara, English unknown.
3. Enai'"teox mank'a'"na, English unknown.
4. Nicu'tcera, red water.
5. 'Mank'a'"skaka, white medicine.
6. Mank'a'" niyetco'tcera, medicine of the water.
7. Ci'xuk'uniṇa, English unknown.
8. Mank'a"ṇe'xeda, English unknown.

If a woman has any trouble with her womb this medicine will cure her immediately. She must not, however, drink it, but inject it. It makes no difference how severe her illness is, this medicine will always effect a cure. This man was blessed with the knowledge of its efficacy.

This is another medicine:

1. Mank'a'" manup'ara'ra, medicine that spreads over the ground.
2. Xa"wiwingi'ckera, medicine to tie with.
3. Mank'a'" p'orop'orora, round medicine.
4. Hap'o'skra, English unknown.
5. Mank'a'" kere'xera, sweet flag.
6. Na"p'aca'k'onank' hura, English unknown.
7. Hunte p'istara, bear liver.

This is all ground together and mixed with water. When thoroughly mixed it is put into a bladder and injected by means of a wing bone.

This is a medicine for diarrhea:

1. K'etcû'nk'sire teo'ra, English unknown.
2. Aceni ho-ap hodô'p'iricera, curled sumac leaves.
3. Mank'a'ni tetco'tcera, medicine of the water.
4. Waraxadax skaka', English unknown.
5. Na"da'nicura, maple sugar.

These are all ground together into a fine powder and sweetened with maple sugar. Otherwise no one would take it, for it does not taste good. It is called hasawañ'komañk'.

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

757 This is medicine used by women when their menstrual flow is not
278 very good:
841

1. Teemanank'e, English unknown.
2. Wazi p'arn'ske abera, pine with flat leaves (?).
3. Waeutei abera, red cedar leaves.
4. Mank'a p'orop'oro abera, round medicine leaves.

All four of these ingredients are ground, mixed together, and then mixed with water. They are then drunk by any woman having trouble with her menstrual flow. After she has taken it she makes knots in the belt and ties it around her waist. As many knots as she makes that many days will it take her to get well. She also smokes herself with cedar leaves.

757 The next medicine that I wish to speak of is compounded as follows:
278

1. K'ewaxgu'u"sera, scent of a toad.
2. Waninkeu'te na'ntckera, heart of a red bird.
3. Haetce'kera, strawberries.
4. Wankcik na'ntckera, human heart.
5. Xawi"ja", a plant.

278 If this medicine were mixed with whisky and given to any person,
[754] the latter would surely die within a year. The frog that is used in this medicine becomes alive in the stomach of the person who drinks it and kills him. If he took the same medicine and mixed it with
[832] paint and then rubbed it over his face, all who looked at him would take a liking to him and give him presents, and the women would fall in love with him and want to marry him. The reason that the women become smitten is because they can not resist the sight of a ripe strawberry. The human heart in the mixture is the object that makes the medicine so powerful, and the red bird heart strengthens it.
[826] Whenever these two, the human heart and the heart of the red bird, are used in medicines, the medicine is always remarkably efficacious.

832 If a woman makes fun of you and you feel hurt about it and want to revenge yourself, get one of her hairs and dip the root into this medicine and then tie it up. Hang the medicine bag in the woods and whenever the wind blows the woman will get lonesome for you and her head will ache. Finally she will get crazy. She will never cease talking about you. This is one of the medicines this man was blessed with. Some of them die from the effects of it. It is not a good thing, but the Winnebago thought that it was a very great thing. (Now that they know the Creator, they know that it is bad.)

755 Here is another medicine that we have, and it is prepared in the
278 following way: Four trees of a certain species are peeled near the roots lying on the east side. Then the second bark is also peeled. Then these are taken and boiled together with a square-stemmed weed. The whole mixture is used to induce vomiting. This vomiting would rid a person of a spell cast upon him which was preventing

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

him from killing game. In the particular case mentioned above the spell was the following: A man killed a deer, and a pregnant woman ate a piece of the intestine. From that time on the man was unable to kill any more deer. 755 278 [224 843]

The above medicine is used to break the spell of ill luck in hunting caused by the following actions: If a man cohabits with a widow, or if one who is a widower eats together with another person, or if he smokes out of the same pipe as another person. Not only would the medicine free him from his ill luck in hunting, but it would give him good luck in cards and speed in running. [589]

Here is an astringent medicine. It is compounded of a mixture of the "clear" medicine and the "plant that spreads itself on the ground." It is used for the following purposes. As an application for swellings, for illness after childbirth, and for general sores and eruptions of the skin. In case of illness after childbirth it is injected. For sores, etc., it is taken internally. 757 278 [844]

Here is another medicine, called bladder medicine. It is made of the roots of a certain weed. These roots are boiled and then drunk. If one is troubled with stricture, the drinking of this medicine will enable him to pass water immediately. The same medicine is used to alleviate a toothache and to stop too profuse a menstrual flow. [841]

Now this is another medicine. It is made of the leaves of a certain plant. These leaves are rolled up and then drunk down with water. The medicine is used for all stomach complaints.

Here is another medicine used for diarrhea and dysentery. It is made from the roots of a plant that has many thorns and beautiful white blossoms. The roots are scraped and the scrapings boiled and gulped down. At least a pint of this concoction must be taken. It can also be used as a mouth wash for those troubled with sore mouths.

We have another medicine used to rid a person of superfluous bile. This acts as a strong physic and not only cures a person of his indisposition but also gives him a great appetite.

Here is another medicine. It is called the medicine for burns. It consists of the leaves of a certain weed that is dried. If anyone has a burn, he chews some of this dried weed and then applies it to the burn. [752]

Here is also a medicine for private diseases, compounded of the following:

1. Doxicu'tckera hara, red willow bark.
2. Ma'sixu'tckeda hara, English unknown.
3. Nap'a'hira hara, sharp tree.

These barks are pulverized and mixed together with skunk oil.

The next medicine I am going to describe is used in poisoning. It is called small-part-of-a-black-root-tree. It is used for many pur- 754 278

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

754 poses. If, for instance, I wish a person to become blind or if I dis-
278 like him or were jealous of him because he was better off than myself, I would do the following: I would get a small part of a black root and pulverize it. Then I would mix it with ghost snuff and put it into my medicine bag. When I am ready to shoot the person I shake my bag and make the medicine fly out, and it would enter his eyes and make them sore. Soon he would become blind. I also use this medicine when I go on the warpath. I wrap it in a piece of buckskin and wear it around my neck. As long as I wear it in this manner I will never be shot.

This medicine is also used as a poultice. If a man has a pain anywhere, he makes four incisions in his body at that place, with the point of a knife, and applies the medicine.

754 Here is another medicine. It is kept in a large bundle. It is
[788] used in the following way: At a medicine dance a person may put an eagle feather on the nose of an otter-skin bag and then open the bundle containing his medicine and bring the medicine in contact with the nose of the otter-skin bag. The individual then enters the medicine-dance lodge. He makes note of the place where the person whom he dislikes is sitting. After a while he gets up and makes a circuit of the lodge four times and shoots at this person. He sees to it that one of the feathers attached to the otter-skin bag lodges just where he wishes it. Either he wishes to kill the man outright or to make him suffer for a long time. Should the victim die, the man who does the shooting must be very careful for he might easily injure himself. He must know, for instance, exactly when his victim is going to die and then as soon as he is dead he must open his medicine bundle and let the feather return, which it does as soon as the person at whom it was shot is dead. A black hawk is then heard in the distance. As soon as it approaches the man utters curious sounds and the feather alights right in the medicine bundle. When the feather returns, however, it is always black, though when it started it was red. One might imagine that there had been two distinct feathers.

If the man who shot the feather does not know when his victim dies and consequently does not make the necessary preparations for opening his medicine bundle, such as imitating the cry of a black hawk, or if, worse still, he is asleep, the feather will land upon him and he would likewise die.

This same medicine is also used for the following purpose: If a person offends you and you wish to take revenge by killing him, take your medicine bundle and whenever you come across the footprints of your prospective victim then open your medicine bundle and take out a striped feather from it and sing a song. When you are finished, make certain sounds and stab the footprints. You can

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

So he spoke to him. "Thus will your life be. Look at yourself." So he looked at himself and his hair was very white. As one who had attained a full life he saw himself. "All that are within this lodge bless you," the spirit continued. "You have come to the Buffalo village." This he was told, so he looked at the lodge full of people. And those whom he had seen up to that time as human beings now were buffaloes.

"Human, they bless you is why they went after you. Human, if anyone is weighted with life and a reasonable amount of tobacco is given, such a one would be able to do the following":

A dead man was placed in the middle of the lodge, and all of those in the lodge tried their power, but none succeeded in restoring him to life. At last the spirits let the man try it. So he tried. When he arose, all those in the lodge began to make sounds and when he began to exert his powers he sang buffalo songs. When he was through with these songs, he walked toward the dead man, in the middle of the lodge. He blew on him once, then again and again. Now the man began to open his eyes. Then he blew on him for the fourth time and he caused him to rise.

"Human, you have overcome all of us," said the buffalo chief. "Human, thus shall you ever do to people. If anyone is sick and the proper offerings are made to you, send some tobacco to our council lodge and I will remember you. You must send all the tobacco that is offered to you. I will remember it. This council lodge is given to you and to your posterity as long as it lasts. As long as the earth lasts that long your posterity will have occasions on which to pour tobacco. Whatever blessing they ask, we will bestow upon them while we smoke their tobacco. As many as are the kettles that they offer to us, we will never accept one without giving them a blessing. We are in control of wars: the Earthmaker has given us control of them, and if you ask for it we will give it to you. And if you ask for life we will bestow that blessing upon you and accept your offerings."

They also blessed him with plants for medicine. This is the way they did it. Each of the spirits caused him to see a plant and to know the purposes to which it could be put. They told him to make offerings to the plants whenever he gave a feast, so that the plants would become more powerful. They also blessed him with a drum. "This you must beat when you give a feast and it will tell us your wants. We will understand the drum. We will make your drum holy for you, and you must treat it as such," they told him. "You must keep it holy. Whenever you are on the warpath you must take it with you and it will help you. Human, your enemies you will overcome; your weapons only will be sharp if your posterity will never give up this ceremony." So they spoke to him. "Whenever

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12

575 796 the Buffalo clan feast, the society of those who have been blessed by the buffaloes, and the society of those who wear buffalo headdresses; the last apparently of Sioux origin.

The medicine dance has been described by the author in some detail,[1] and a general description will be found on page 350.

796 727 Of the semipermanent societies, the *hok'ize're* dance is given after every successful war party by those four individuals who have counted coup. It has only a temporary existence, for it ceases to be an organization as soon as each individual performance is over. Its main purpose seems to be the desire to transfer to the victor, from the skulls or the scalps of the slain enemies obtained on that particular warpath, the valor and prowess for which the slain person was noted.

527 In addition to the above ceremonies there were a number of pleasure and miscellaneous dances that are described on page 379.

796 278 There were apparently a number of very important feasts connected with certain medicines, the principal one of which was the Black Earth Medicine feast; but unfortunately no account of this was obtained, owing to lack of time.

CEREMONIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE CLANS

THE CLAN FEASTS

THE THUNDERBIRD CLAN OR CHIEF FEAST

796 614 *Introduction.*—The chief feast, or, as it may more properly be called, the feast of the bird clans, is generally given once a year, sometimes in late spring. It was also given on certain other occasions for specific purposes. At the present time it is given by the members of the Thunderbird clan and the prevalence of the appellation "chief feast" would seem to indicate that it was at all times the feast of the Thunderbird clan. We ought then to expect to find clan feasts of the other members of the *waŋgeregi* division, namely, of the Warrior, Eagle, and Pigeon clans. No such feasts are given to-day, however, and the members of these latter three clans always speak of the chief or bird feast as their specific clan feast. As such it is also regarded by the members of the *maⁿnegi* division.

In the total absence of historical data it is quite useless to speculate about the significance of one feast sufficing for four clans, where in strict analogy to the feasts of the other clans we would expect to find one for each clan; yet the idea that naturally presents itself is that we are in reality dealing with one clan that has become split up into four subclans. Such a view has been expressed by J. O. Dorsey,[2] but the data upon which he based his opinion seem to us highly

[114]

[1] The Ritual and Significance of the Winnebago Medicine Dance, Journal of American Folklore, vol. XXIV, No. XCII, 1911.

[2] Siouan Sociology, 15th Ann. Rept. Bur. Amer. Ethn., p. 241.

My Brother-in-Law Thunder Cloud

You said that I could use all the best herbs that grow upon you, and that I would always be able to effect cures with them. I beseech you for those herbs now and I ask you to help me to cure this sick man.

Then Thunder Cloud breathed upon me and squirted some water on my chest. "What I have said is very true and very holy, I believe," he said. "Indeed now you will get well."

Thunder Cloud knew all the good medicines that exist and he used them in order to heal me and so that I might recover from my illness. I got well. Indeed Thunder Cloud was holy.

Thunder Cloud was also what we call a poisoner. He used to travel at dead of night, it was said. One night at about eleven o'clock he got ready to poison a family by the name of B. We were all listening, sitting in our lodge. Then outside we heard him make some noise. We were afraid of him because we knew he was a poisoner. Indeed he claimed to be in control of our household. My family would do nothing without first consulting him, for we were afraid of him. We believed that he had come from the spirits, that he was a reincarnated man and, if displeased, would poison us. So whatever he asked we did.

He had been married to my eldest sister and after her death wished to marry the second sister. Where he had come from at the dwelling-place of Earth-maker,[8] my elder sister was now staying, he said. But now he claimed that the second sister resembled the

[8] Circumlocution for saying that she was dead.